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Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office, April 2, 1891. Issued Weekly. Subscription Price, \$2.50 Per Year.

APRIL 2, 1891.

No. 87.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers.

NEW YORK.

31 Rose St., N. Y. P. O. Box 2734.

5 Cents.

## GRIMESY'S PAIR OF KIDS.

By WILL WINNER.



THE MAJOR CAME TEARING DOWN LIKE A WILD BULL, TRIPPED OVER THE WIRE, AND TURNED A SOMERSAULT THE REST OF THE WAY.



# GRIMESY'S PAIR OF KIDS.

By WILL WINNER.

## CHAPTER I.

### PREACHERS AND PRIZE-FIGHTERS—TAPPING THE WINE.

As our two well-known friends, Grimesy and Mert, sat in the office of the hotel, awaiting the arrival of more victims, two elegantly dressed though rather tough, swaggering sort of fellows came in. They swaggered up to the desk, and one of them said:

"Say, young feller, air you de clerk?"

"That's what they claim," said Grimesy.

"Well, dat's all right," said the fellow. "Say, young fellow, d'ye know who we are?"

"I'm sorry to say that in the course of my fashionable career I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you," said Grimesy.

"I t'ought not. Well, my name's Tug Morris, an' me pardner's name's Mike Hooly, better known as Mickey de Sluggah. See?"

"I'm delighted to know you, gentlemen," said Grimesy, with a great show of politeness. "What can I do for you?"

"W'y, me an' me pardner wants a room, or rudder we wants two rooms, what ye calls a sweet. See?"

"I catch on. You want a bedroom and parlor," said Grimesy.

"Dat's de ticket."

"All right, gentlemen, I think I can fix you out to the queen's taste. Front!"

"Hold on till I tell ye. Ye see, we're sportin' gents, and we come here 'cause it's kinder private, an' no one won't git on to our curves here. We're 'rangin' for a fight, we are, an' 'spect some gents here to meet us to-night. See?"

"Yes."

"Wal, now we're goin' to register under false names, 'cause de pleece is watching us like hawks; but you'll know all 'bout it, an' w'en de gents calls dis evenin' you jes' send 'em up. Ye understan'?"

"Yes, that's all right."

"Now, let's see," he said, looking over the register. "How'll we register? Hello! De las' covs as registered is a couple o' revs. Dat's de racket. We'll register as a pair o' gospel sharps; dat'll t'row de pleece clean off der bearings."

So down went the names of Rev. Felix Snooks and Rev. Peter Papper, right beneath the Reverends Snively Wormwood and Comfortless Howler.

"Front!" yelled Grimesy. "Show these gentlemen up to 9."

"All right, sir," said Mert, starting off.

"Don't forgit ter send de gents up soon's dey shows up," said Morris.

"No. I'll send 'em up," said Grimesy.

Mert had barely got back into the office, when a party of six or seven solemn-looking gentlemen marched in with the sedateness of pall-bearers.

The foremost of the crowd glanced over the register a moment, and then said, in a nasal voice:

"My young friend, there are a couple of ministers of the gospel stopping here, and as we have an appointment with them, we desire to see them."

"All right," said Grimesy. "They just went up a minute ago, and told me that if you called to send you up to their room. Front! Show these gentlemen to room 9."

Mert waltzed off with the solemn crowd to the prize-fighters' room.

When he came back, Mert said:

"Those are the rummiest looking sporting men I ever set eyes on. They look and act more like preachers to me."

"They don't look much like sports, do they?" said Grimesy. "But these sporting dudes are a queer lot. Some of 'em put on the sanctimonious on purpose, I think, to throw you off the track."

"But I don't believe these chaps are sports. Now, wouldn't it be a pleasant racket if it should turn out that they were some sort of church people and wanted to see the preachers?"

"That would be kind of mixing things. But as the gospel covs didn't leave any word for any one to be sent up to them, how was I to know?"

"Oh, well," said Mert, "we'll wait, and if anybody calls for the sluggers we can send them to the preachers' room, and that will even up matters."

At that moment about a dozen tough looking individuals, some well-dressed, others rather shabby, swaggered in.

The leader slouched up to the desk, and after glancing about suspiciously, said, in a confidential whisper:

"Is dey a couple o' sportin' gents stoppin' here?"

"Yes," replied Grimesy.

"Did dey say any'ting 'bout 'spectin' some callers dis evening?"

"Yes. They said if you came to send you up to their room. Front! Show these gents to room 11."

"All right, sir," said Mert. Then, whispering to Grimesy:

"Now there will be fun."

"I s'pose so," said Grimesy; "but Jags should have told me that there was somebody to call on the gospel spouters. You see, they came in while I was out, and the first I knew about 'em was when the slugger read their names on the register."

"Oh, well, it's just as well to furnish 'em a little variety. This way, gentlemen."

And Mert led the sluggers off to the preachers' apartments.

"Well," said Grimesy, as soon as Mert returned, "what is the outlook for a racket?"

"Can't tell yet," said Mert. "Everything was working smoothly, but there was a good deal of talking going on in 9."

"There's going to be some fun up there, and I must see it," said Grimesy. "You stay here, Mert, and run the shebang, and I'll run up and pipe it off and then come back and tell you all about it."

"All right."

Grimesy went up stairs to see how his mixture of preachers and pugilists was getting along, leaving Mert in the office to scoop in fresh victims as they might arrive.

Grimesy had scarcely disappeared, when there was a lively shuffling of feet on the stair-way, and a moment later six disgusted looking men came tearing into the office.

"Where's that clerk that sent us up to those ruffians' room a little while ago?" asked the foremost, in a husky voice.

"He's just stepped out," said Mert. "He'll be back soon, I hope."

"I hope so, too," cried the man. "We came in here and asked to be shown to the room of a couple of brother ministers, who are to start for Africa to-morrow as missionaries, and the clerk, either ignorantly or maliciously, sent us to the room of a couple of low, brutal prize-fighters!"

"This house must be run on a very elegant system, I must say," continued the minister, sarcastically. "We were shown up, as I say, to what we supposed was the room of our reverend brothers, and were ushered in the apartment occupied by these ruffians. We were surprised, not to say disgusted, with their appearance at the start but as we had never met our brothers, we did not know but they might be reformed thugs, as there are some in the ministry; but when they commenced talking about 'gate-money,' 'forfeits,' and such things, our suspicions were aroused, and as soon as we could politely do so, prepared to leave the room."

"At this the ruffians became enraged, and characterized our leaving as a desire to 'crawlfish,' as they put it. They grew very violent, and although we withdrew as quickly as possible, we did not succeed in doing so until we had been rather roughly handled."

"I'm very sorry, gentlemen," said Mert. "But——"



Here he was interrupted by a terrific clattering of feet on the stairs, and two ministerial looking gentlemen in badly disarranged attire and bloody noses, rushed in, followed at a little distance by Grimesy, cool and placid as an early spring morning.

"Where's the clerk?" roared one of them.

"Here he comes," said Merty, glad to slip out of any more trouble.

Grimesy strolled in behind the desk as quietly and deliberately as an old maid goes to bed.

"Are you the clerk?" asked one of the ministers, with his collar put up over his ear, and the top of his silk hat punched out.

"Yes, sir," said Grimesy. "Want a room, I s'pose. Front?"

"No, we do not want a room," roared the minister, "but we do want to know your motive in sending those ruffians up to our room!"

"I had no motive in doing so," said Grimesy, coolly. "The gentlemen requested to be shown up, and I complied."

"Gentlemen!" roared the preacher. "If those low-browed villains are your ideal of gentlemen, sir, you are in a sad state of moral depravity. I call them cut-throats!"

"Here are the gentlemen themselves," said Grimesy, pointing to the other six ministers. "Let them answer for themselves."

"They've just been kicking to me," said Merty, "because they said the two ministers they found in the room were prize-fighters."

"Is that so?" said Grimesy. "Oh, well, if they each claim that the others are toughs, it's a stand off. We've nothing else to say."

The eight preachers glared at each other, or rather the two glared at the six, and the six at the two for a moment, and then one of the six said, as his expression softened:

"There's some mistake here. These are not the men whom we saw in the room."

"And these," said one of the two, "are not the men who came into our room. There are not so many of them, and they have more the appearance of gentlemen. There must be a mistake somewhere."

"Well, gentlemen, all I know about it is, that I sent these gentlemen to room 9," said Grimesy.

"Room 9?" cried the two ministers, in a breath. "We were not in room 9, we were in room 11."

"Ah, then the bell-boy made a mistake," said Grimesy. "Front! show these gentlemen to room 9."

"We will not go to room 9," said one of the six. "We have just been thrown out of room 9!"

"Well, I'll see about it," said Grimesy, and he darted off up stairs, three steps at a jump.

He found that the pugilists had all gone into room 9, and he returned and informed the preachers of the fact, and they finally consented to go up to room 11.

Having finally succeeded in untangling the prize-fighters from the ministers, the two boys had a hearty laugh at the fun the mixture had provided for them.

"Now tell me about the preachers and pugilists, Grimesy," said Merty.

"Oh, yes," said Grimesy. "Well, I took a tall office stool up with me and put it between the doors of 9 and 11, so that I could see over the transoms of both rooms."

"Of course the gang that we sent up first had been in the room for a few minutes, but they had just got seated, and one of the prize-fighters said, as he puffed a cloud of smoke into the preachers' faces:

"Well, now, boys, what's the row?"

"Well, you ought to 've seen them there parsons' faces. They looked as if they'd put up their last nickel for a lottery ticket, and got left."

"One of 'em kind of turned red, and cleared his throat as if he'd swallowed a fish bone, and finally said:

"I do not know that I grasp the drift of your observation."

"And then the prize-fighters got mad, and one of 'em said:

"Say, ye dough-faced boobies, what song-and-dance

yer stuffin' us wid, any way? Now, ef you mean business, put up de stuff now, see? And stop dat whinin'."

"And then the preachers got scared, and jumped up, and tried to run out of the room; but the sluggers headed 'em off, and one of 'em hollered:

"No, ye don't play no crawfish game on us!"

"And then they commenced slugging the preachers right and left, and the preachers got out o' there as quick as they could, but their clothes wasn't fit to go to church in when they did get out."

"In the meantime the gang o' sluggers in 11 waltzed up to the two preachers and shook hands all round, and you'd a' thought the preachers' heads were going to fly off."

"Finally, they got squatted round on chairs, sofas, and the bed, and began to chin."

"What did they say?" asked Merty.

"Well, the preachers started the talk by saying that it was very kind of their brethren to come to see them on the eve of their departure for that dark and distant land."

"That kind of surprised the sluggers, and they looked at each other and winked."

"The preacher went on, and said:

"No, my beloved brethren, one never knows when he casts the gage into this hazardous arena, whether he will ever come out of it alive."

"The sluggers looked at each other again, winked and stuck their tongues in their cheeks. Finally, one of 'em said:

"Looker here, you fellows, what ye tryin' ter git through ye? D'ye want ter flunk? If yer do, say so, an' don't go whinin' about like sick kids. There ain't nothin' put up yit, an' if ye ain't got the sand ter shy yer castors, now's de time ter yell."

"Those preachers' faces were a study after that speech. They looked at each other in bewilderment, and each one's face seemed to say to the other that it gave it up."

"Finally, one of 'em chipped in something like this:

"Brethren, I fear that you have not drunk from the stream of life that giveth strength and wisdom; you come not clothed as becomes one of the chosen, and, moreover, you are weak in the spirit."

"I don't think the sluggers caught onto more than half o' that palaver, but they caught enough to think they'd been insulted. One of 'em said:

"Now, see here, cullies, dat's drawin' it a leetle strong. Mebbe we ain't dressed accordin' to de lates' dude fashion, an' mebbe we is. W'at's clothes got ter do wid dis knockout, anyway? But dat odder remark o' yourn 'bout us not drinking' enough, dat shows ye don't know w'at yer a-talkin' about. But let dat pass, it don't signify, eider. You said dat we was weak. We don't let dat pass fer a cent. See?"

"And that crowd o' toughs began to peel their coats lively."

"What did the preachers do?"

"The preachers? Why, they looked like rats hunting a hole to crawl out at. They dodged first one way and then another; but the toughs had 'em cornered, and began to knock 'em about the room like ten-pins. At last, though, when there seemed to be no chance for 'em to get out, those gospel sharps just lit in and made things hum for a few minutes; and it wasn't no time before they were walking over half a dozen of 'em. They just fought their way out, the preachers did, and then skipped."

"What did the sluggers do?"

"They didn't do anything, only looked surprised, and one of 'em that had been knocked out wiped the blood off his face, and said:

"Who in Jericho 'd thought them dudes could hit so blamed hard? And another one remarked that it was 'playing it low down on de perfesh fer colleges ter learn all dem Johnnies ter box.'"

As everything had by this time quieted down, the boys sat around for a while, when Grimesy asked:

"Aren't you a bit sleepy, Merty?"

"No; but I'm awful hungry."



"So am I. I wonder if we can't get into the pantry, and get something to eat?" said Grimesy.

"I'm with you, if you can."

They got the key to the pantry, and after a good deal of fumbling about in the dark succeeded in finding some cold chicken and a few other things, with which they loaded themselves up, and prepared to go.

"We're all right on the solids," said Grimesy; "but I'd like to find something to drink."

"Strike a match," suggested Merty.

"No, that won't do. Somebody might get on to us. I'll find it, if there's any thing here."

"What's this?" said Merty.

"What does it feel like?"

"Pickles or something, in a jar, with liquid over it."

"Maybe its canned fruit. Fetch it along."

"Wait till I taste of it," said Merty. "No, it isn't fruit, nor it isn't pickles, although it's kind of sour. Golly! but it's tough! What in creation can it be, I wonder?"

"Let me taste it," said Grimesy, jabbing his fingers down into the jar. "It's kind of soft, isn't it? I guess it's pickled cabbage. Fetch it along."

"All right," said Merty; "but if you can eat it, you've got better teeth than I have."

"Oh, I can eat anything from a glass bottle to a rubber car spring," said Grimesy. "Well, there doesn't seem to be any drinkables there; I guess we'll have to get along on water."

"Well, come on, let's get out where it's light, and see what we've got," said Merty.

"Here we are," said Grimesy, when they got into the office and put their booty on the counter. "Now we'll feast. Gimme my pickled cabbage."

"Here you are," said Merty, handing Grimesy the jar. "It's queer looking cabbage."

"Great snakes!" cried Grimesy, as he lifted something out of the jar between his finger and thumb, and held it up to the light. "What in blazes d'ye call that?"

"That," said Merty, examining the article, "that looks to me like a lady's night-cap."

"That's what it is," said Grimesy, "and the jar is full of 'em."

"What's the liquid?"

"That's buttermilk," replied Grimesy, "I see it all now. Some old lady has just put her night-caps in this buttermilk to bleach them. No wonder you couldn't eat them."

"I did eat about half o' one; but the thing didn't seem to have much flavor to it," said Merty.

"And less nutriment, I should say."

"No, a fellow wouldn't get very fat on night-caps," said Merty.

"We want to hustle the jar back into the pantry," said Grimesy. "I'd smile to see the old lady's face when she sees the holes you've chewed in her night-caps."

The boys finished their midnight lunch, and then Grimesy said:

"It's too bad we can't find a bottle of the gov'nor's wine; sitting up all night this way a fellow needs a little something to brace him up. I have it."

"Where?"

"An idea, I mean. The gov'nor has a cask of wine in a store-room which adjoins his bedroom. The only trouble is he carries the key."

"Can't we pick the lock, or find a key to fit it?" asked Merty.

"We might; but he's liable to wake up and catch us. Besides, the butler sleeps in a room adjoining the store-room on the other side, so we'd be between two fires."

"How do you propose to work it, then; or are you going to give it up?"

"Give up nothing," said Grimesy. "I'll tell you. If you noticed, the ceiling over the pantry and kitchen is not plastered. The floor overhead and the joists are painted, and that's all the ceiling there is. Now what I propose is to get an auger and bore a hole up through the ceiling into the cask, put in a hollow cane I have here, and draw out all the wine we want."

"That's all very fine," said Merty; "but how are you going to stop the wine from all running out when you get what you want?"

"That's easy. You see, unless there's an air-hole somewhere the wine won't run very fast, anyhow, and when we get what we want we can plug up the end of the cane for future reference. See?"

"That's a great head o' yours, Grimesy. My opinion is it'll get you into Congress or Sing Sing some day."

"Out of respect for my worthy ancestors, if I have any, let us hope it will be Sing Sing. But let's get to work."

Grimesy found a large gimlet, and after procuring a step-ladder, they proceeded once more to the pantry, lit the gas, and Grimesy began to make calculations as to the exact location of the cask.

"Let me see," he mused, "the cask sits near the partition, between the butler's room and the store-room. Now, I have it, I think, it's about there," he said, placing the step-ladder and mounting it, gimlet in hand.

Grimesy struck the gimlet into the wood and commenced boring, and when he thought he must be about through the board, he said:

"Now, Merty, come up here with a bowl, and hold it under to catch the wine."

Merty mounted the ladder with the bowl, and Grimesy went on boring.

All at once the gimlet seemed to strike something soft, and at the same time they heard an unearthly yell in the room above.

"By hooky, we're discovered!" cried Grimesy, pulling his gimlet out quickly, and preparing to descend.

"That's too bad," said Merty, noticing a few drops of claret that followed the gimlet as Grimesy pulled it out. "Just as we were getting at the wine, too."

The boys heard a lively tramping of feet overhead, so they turned out the gas and hurried out into the office.

## CHAPTER II.

### A SAD TIME WITH BURGLARS—A PAIR OF KIDS.

"I wonder who gave that horrible yell?" said Grimesy, when he and his chum got back into the office.

"Maybe it was the old man," suggested Merty.

"Like enough; but what could have made him yell that way?"

"Probably he saw the gimlet come up through, and thought burglars were trying to get in."

"How could he see the gimlet? It went into the cask, for we saw the claret dripping down."

"That's so. And when you come to think of it, it must have been a fake alarm. We might have staid right there and got our wine."

"What puzzles me, though," said Grimesy, "is who it was that yelled, and why?"

"I'll tell you," said Merty; "maybe the old man was having a quiet little drink all by himself, and he got a little too much."

"That's the racket, I guess, but—who's this prancing down stairs as though something was biting him behind?"

The next moment the negro butler rushed in in a terrible state of excitement.

"What's eating you, Sam?" asked Grimesy, with a yawn, as though he'd just woke up.

"Why—why—I's dun been stabbed, sah!" cried the coon.

"Stabbed? How? By whom?"

"Dunno, burglars, I t'ink!" gasped the coon.

"Burglars!" cried Grimesy. "Impossible."

"No, sah, it ain't impossible! I know dey was burglars!"

"How do you know? Did you see them?"

"No—no—sah, I didn't see dem; dey jis' stab me an' run, I t'ink!"

"Ah, you were dreaming, Sam!"

"No, sah, I wasn't dreamin'. I dun been stabbed, sah. I kin show yer de place!"

"All right, let's see the place."

"Heah it am," said the coon, pulling down his trousers and showing a round hole in his thigh, from which the blood was trickling. "Dar it am, sah."

"It couldn't have been done with a razor, Sam, that's one satisfaction," said Grimesy.



"No, sah, it wa'n't done wif no razor, it war done wif a—dajjer!"

"A dagger, you mean."

"Ye—yes, sah, a dajjer."

"Well, tell us all about how it happened, Sam," said Grimesy.

"Wal, sah, it war jist like dis. Ye see it am powerful clost an' hot in my room, so I goes in de sto'-room, which am coolah, puts a blanket on de flo' an' went to sleep dar. Wal, sah, I war sleepin' 'way dar as peaceful as a lam', when all at wunst som'fin' a jabbed me in de laig, an' I jumped up an' hollered, but couldn't see nobody. An' de funnies' t'ing' 'bout it is, dat dey dun stab me on de side I was layin' on, jis' as if dey dun struck de dajjer froo de flo' from below."

"This is strange, Sam, but there have been no burglars in the house, or we should have heard them."

"Doan know 'bout dat, sah!" said the darky. "Dem burglars is powerful cute, dey is, an' dey's liable ter slip in w'en yer does'nt know nuffin 'bout it. Now, how'd dey know 'nuff to stab me on de onder side ob de laig ef dey wa'n't powerful cute?"

"You're as full of philosophy, Sam, as a dog is full of fleas," said Grimesy, "and to satisfy your longing soul, we'll go and look for burglars."

Grimesy whispered to Merty to go up into his room and get the whiskers and wigs they had used the night previous when they were playing detective, and then he turned to Sam, and said:

"Come, Sam, you and I will go burglar-hunting."

"Ye ain't going' wivout no guns, is ye?" said the darky.

"Probably we had better take a gun or two, Sam," said Grimesy, taking a couble of revolvers from the drawer. "I'll carry them, though. I'm afraid to risk you with a gun, as I have no insurance on my life."

They then began a search of the house for the festive burglars.

Through the kitchen, pantry, dining-room, and finally down into the cellar they went, the half-scared negro keeping close to Grimesy's back.

At length Grimesy said:

"Now, Sam, if they're in the house anywhere they'll be concealed in this narrow corridor. You wait here, and I'll go back through the big hall, cross over, and enter the corridor at the other end, and come this way. If you see them coming toward you give the alarm."

"No, sah, I doan stay heah onless I hab a pistol ter fend myself," cried the coon.

"All right, you take one of these," said Grimesy, handing him one of the revolvers. (He had earlier in the day drawn the balls out of both pistols and substituted blank cartridges.)

Grimesy then went to the other end of the corridor, where he met Merty with the wigs and whiskers, and in a moment the two boys were disguised as very bad looking burglars.

Armed with a bull's-eye lantern, they were now ready for business, and started down the corridor toward the negro.

It was so dark that the coon could not see them, and they did not flash the light until they were within a few yards of him.

When they thought they were close enough Grimesy flashed his bull's-eye, when bang! went the negro's pistol, and he started to run.

Grimesy fired four or five shots, and the coon started on the keen jump through the hall and up stairs, yelling as he went.

The boys slid up stairs to the office as quickly as possible, and put away their disguise.

They could hear the negro still running and yelling, and knew that the house would be alarmed in another minute.

Grimesy took a piece of fine wire and tied it across the stair-way leading up from the office, and then the two boys settled themselves into chairs and feigned sleep.

In another moment the major, in his night-robe and armed with two big pistols, came tearing down like a mad bull, got two-thirds of the way down, tripped over

the wire and turned a somersault the rest of the way, at the same time discharging both pistols.

Grimesy and Merty got up and yawned, and finally ran to the major, who was busy picking himself up.

They pretended to be very much surprised, and Grimesy asked, innocently:

"What's the matter, major! Aren't you well, or did you have a bad dream?"

The major glared at him, but before he could reply, the pugilists, who were staying over night, came rushing down.

The major and the boys had barely time to jump out of the way when the entire delegation came tumbling in a confused heap on the floor, and before they could gather themselves up the servants also came tumbling down, rolling on top of them.

In the course of the next two or three minutes nearly everybody in the house, including Sweatwell, the fat man, and Miss Hulda Spiker, ran down the stairs and tumbled over that innocent wire. So that at the end of that period the office presented a curious spectacle of ruffled, half-clad, disgusted, and kicking humanity.

When everybody had come down, and when the excitement was at such a height that there was little danger of discovery, Grimesy dextrously removed the wire.

For a while, every one was so mad over falling down stairs as to forget for the moment what had called him out; but gradually as anger subsided conversation began and questions were asked about the running and yelling negro.

But instead of getting any satisfaction out of Grimesy or Merty, they found these young men perfect monuments of ignorance.

"What was the matter with Sam?" asked the major.

"Haven't the slightest idea, sir," replied Grimesy, "unless he's been voodooed."

"What do you mean by voodooed?"

"Don't you know what a voodoo is?"

"No," roared the major.

"Why, when a fellow's voodooed, the only way he can be cured is to get somebody to hoodoo him."

"Well, what in thunder is a hoodoo?" yelled the major.

"A hoodoo is just the opposite of a voodoo, just as a mascot is the opposite of a Jonah."

"Thunderation!" roared the major. "What is the fool talking about, anyway? I know as much now as I did before!"

"Well, you're luckier than I am, major, for I don't," said Grimesy.

"Will you explain what you mean by saying that Sam is voodooed?"

"Certainly, major, with pleasure. Ye see, when a fellow gets voodooed, that means that he is under the influence of a voodoo, see?"

"Yes, I see very plainly," said the major, sarcastically.

"Now, perhaps, you will be good enough to explain what a voodoo is!"

"Eh?"

"What is a voodoo?"

"Dunno, sir, only I know that when any one is that way he imagines all sorts o' things, runs and hollers like mad."

"Oh, I see," said the major, cooling down a little. "In other words, the nigger's crazy."

"I wouldn't like to say that, sir, because I might be wrong. All I say is, that I don't know what's the matter with him unless he is voodooed."

"You saw how he acted, didn't you?"

"Oh, I saw him flit by here something like a curved ball, and heard him yelling, but I was kind of sleepy and didn't pay much attention to him—didn't know but he might have taken too much ice-water and it went to his liver."

"Well, I guess we'd better get Sam down here and see what he has to say," said the major.

"Yes, I think so, too," said Grimesy.

The major went up, and after a good deal of coaxing and threatening, succeeded in getting the coon to come down, but it was some time before the major could get anything out of him, he was so badly frightened.



"What made you come running up stairs yelling in that way, Sam?" demanded the major.

"Der burglars, sah!" said Sam, still trembling and glancing nervously about.

"Where were the burglars, Sam?"

"Down stairs, sah!"

"What were you doing down there?"

"We—went down ter look fer burglars, sah," said the coon.

"Well, if you went down to look for burglars, and found what you were looking for, why did you run and yell so?"

"'Cause dey war arter me shootin', sah."

"Nonsense!" roared the major, growing more and more incredulous, and becoming convinced of the truth of Grimesy's statement.

"It am so, sah. Dey war arter me, shootin, like creation, an' some o' de bullets mos' hit me!"

"How did you come to think that there were burglars in the basement?"

"'Cause dey fust comed in my room an' stabbed me in de laig!"

"This is the greatest nonsense I ever heard," cried the major, out of patience. "But tell us all about it, Sam."

The negro related the whole story from the time that Grimesy's gimlet bored into his leg to the time that the alleged burglars shot at him in the narrow corridor.

At the conclusion of this narrative the major said:

"You say that these boys were with you when you went down stairs?"

"Yes, sah."

"How is that, my boy?" asked the major.

Grimesy merely smiled, looked innocent, and shook his head.

"Sam!" roared the major, "you've been drinking!"

"No, sah!"

"But I know you have, Sam. This whole story is pure imagination. Now, go to bed and let us hear no more out of you. I'll forgive you this time. But don't let it occur again! D'ye hear?"

"Yes, sah."

And the major stalked away in dignified disgust.

The crowd soon melted away, and Grimesy and Merty were once more alone.

"We got out of that scrape pretty slick," said Grimesy.

"Yes. But I didn't expect you would have thought of adopting that course?" said Merty.

"That is the only course under such circumstances. Pure ignorance wins where argument fails."

Nothing more worth mentioning occurred during the night, and the boys talked or dozed away the time till seven o'clock, when Jags came on and they went to bed.

It was noon next day before Grimesy came down, and Merty, who had risen earlier, was gone.

Old Jonas Foghorn and Abe Squeezer were in their accustomed corners, surrounded by their cronies, spinning yarns as usual when Grimesy came down.

He strolled over toward them, and gave them a mysterious look when they suddenly stopped their talking and looked scared.

"There's that artful boy agin," said old Abe. "We'd better go afore he bewitches us."

"Don't be afraid o' me, gentlemen," said Grimesy. "I'm as harmless as a snake with its teeth pulled out."

"I dunno 'bout that," said old Abe. "My opinion is the devil's got a mighty long lease on you."

"If that's so, he's not to bother me till his lease runs out."

"Oh, these boys! these boys!" growled the fat old Jonas Foghorn. "They know too much nowadays; they're 'tirely too cute. Now, when you an' me was boys, Abe, lads o' his age didn't know nothin' but what was tole 'em; they knowed too much ter git sassy to older folks."

"Wal, ye can't blame the boys so much," said old Abe, as the twisted off a fresh chew of tobacco from his plug. "Everybody's too all-fired smart these days. When you an' me was boys, folks was satisfied fer to do things themselves. Now they hev machinery fer to do everything.

Fust thing you know they'll hev it so's you kin jest drop a nickel in the slot an' git an ocean steamer."

"That's so," said Jonas. "It jest beats all the way things is done. Now, look at that thar macheen thar! Drop a nickel in the slot an' git weighed—that's a powerful cute concern, an' I do b'leeve thar's some deviltry 'bout it."

"It is cur'us," said Abe, "that nothin' won't move it but a nickel."

"That's because you ain't onto its curvelets," put in Grimesy. "I can weigh all day long by just blowing my breath into the slot."

"Ye can't do it," snapped old Abe. "Yer a purty smart kid, but ye can't tell me that ye kin work that thar masheen by blowin' yer breath inter the slot."

"What'll you bet?"

"I ain't got no money ter bet, er I'd bet ye my last cent thet ye can't do it," cried old Abe, testily. "Now, I've got powerful good lungs, an' ef the thing kin be done, I kin do it."

With that old Abe got up and toddled over to the machine, climbed upon the platform, put his mouth to the slot, and blew until he was purple in the face, but couldn't budge it.

"I knowed it couldn't be done," he growled, getting down and shuffling back to his seat.

"I'll bet I kin do it, ef it kin be done," grunted the fat old Jonas, climbing on to the platform with a good many puffs and grunts.

He put his mouth to the slot and blew until his face looked like a bladder painted red, but it was no go, and he got down and gave it up in disgust.

From that about everybody in the room tried it, including Tug Morris, the boxer, who had strolled in during the discussion.

"Wal, de t'ing can't be did, dat's all," said Tug, as he swaggered from the platform. "De t'ing can't be did, an' I'll bet ag'in it."

"How much?" asked Grimesy, coolly.

"T'ousand dollar, if ye likes!"

"I haven't that much money," said Grimesy, "but I'll bet you five dollars."

"Nuff sed," said Morris, pulling out the money.

Grimesy fished out small change from various pockets to the amount of five dollars, and the money was put up in Jags' hands.

In the meantime Grimesy had adroitly slipped a nickel into his mouth.

"I git on de platform meself, see?" said Tug. "Ye don't play no flim-flam on yours trooly."

"All right," said Grimesy, "you get on."

Tug got on to the platform, and Grimesy put his mouth to the slot and gave a little blow, at the same time letting the nickel slip out of his mouth into the slot. The hand moved round on the dial to 185 pounds, and Tug almost fainted.

Every eye in the crowd had been on Grimesy during the performance, and the exclamations of astonishment which followed it could not have been much more extravagant if he had performed a genuine miracle.

"Ye needn't tell me no more," exclaimed old Abe, "that that thar kid ain't in pardnership with Old Nick!"

"Old Nick nothin'," said Tug. "It's some blamed trick he's got."

And he swaggered away in disgust as Grimesy pocketed the money.

Twenty-three's bell rang just then, and Grimesy dashed off up stairs.

He had been gone but a little while when he was seen to return and go out on the street. Soon afterward he came in, leading two dirty children, with whom he proceeded up stairs without saying a word to any one.

Old Abe, who always kept an eye on the boy, noticed the circumstance, and said:

"Wonder what that thar young imp's up to now."

"Somebody wants a couple o' kids to run on errands, mebbe," remarked old Jonas.

That settled it so far as they were concerned, and nobody thought any more about it. Grimesy returned to the office and lounged into a chair with an unconcerned



air, and soon afterward the dirty children came down stairs and went away.

A few minutes later the robust and vivacious Miss Spiker swept down the stairs with an indignant air, and went up to the clerk.

She was noticed in animated and angry discussion with the clerk, and shortly the major came in, and she transferred her conversation to him. A long conference ensued, in which Miss Spiker appeared to be greatly excited, from the way she shook her fist, swayed her stout form, and frowned, while the major seemed to be trying to placate her.

Finally, the discussion ended, Miss Spiker flounced up stairs, and the major called Grimesy.

"Well, sir," said the major, sternly, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"That depends," said Grimesy, innocently. "Modesty forbids my saying much for my good qualities, and I wouldn't like to hurt my feelings by saying anything bad."

"I mean in regard to Miss Spiker," roared the major.

"Oh, about her? Well, she's a very nice young lady—not as young as she has been—but still quite young of her age. She——"

"Silence!" roared the major. "She says that you grossly insulted her!"

"Insulted her?"

"That's what she said."

"Why, major, you know I wouldn't intentionally insult a lady for the world," cried Grimesy, with a look of injured innocence.

"I—I didn't think you would," said the major, melting right down under Grimesy's soulful eyes and soft speech. "In fact, I was sure you wouldn't, and told Miss Spiker so. Now, my boy, tell me all about it."

"Well, sir," said Grimesy, looking as serious as an undertaker's sign, "Miss Spiker rang for me a little while ago, and I went up."

"That was right, my boy."

"I knocked at her door, and she opened it."

"Yes, yes; go on."

"She looked worried about something, and wore a sad, sweet smile, like a Mormon widow."

"Exactly."

"She sighed great, deep-chested sighs, like a fellow that's exercising on an empty stomach, and kind of wilted into a chair, like a ton of sea-weed, and groaned."

"Yes, I see," said the major.

"It broke me all up. I felt sure she was going to invite me to her grandmother's funeral, and I commenced to feel wet around the eyes, as if I'd been peeling onions. She sighed some more and wiped her eyes on her stockings."

"What?"

"She was darning stockings at the time."

"Oh!"

"Then she looked up at me kind o' sad and pleading, like a pug begging for a liver, and said, said she:

"Grimesy, my boy, I've lost——"

"What?" gasped the major.

"That's just what I asked," said Grimesy.

"What?" said I."

"And what did she say?"

"Kids."

"What?" cried the major.

"Kids. She said she'd lost a pair of pale kids, slightly soiled, and she'd be ever so much ableeged—she said ableeged, meaning obliged—if I'd find 'em for her. She said they would be on the sidewalk between here and the next street south, if anywhere. So I went out, and sure enough I found a pair o' pale kids, not slightly soiled, but comfortably dirty, having a scrap over a rotten banana. So I gently separated them and brought them up to Miss Spiker."

"What did she say?" asked the major, nearly ready to split with laughter.

"She didn't seem to appreciate my kindness. In fact, she looked real angry, and said I was either an impudent critter or an idiot, and she wasn't quite sure which."

"Well, my boy, I can't blame you very much," laughed

the major. "The joke was too good to resist. But don't play any more practical jokes—on her, at least."

"No, sir," said Grimesy.

And the major strolled away.

Just then the bus rolled up to the door and two passengers got out and entered the office. One was a commercial traveler, a very young and modest man, with a fresh complexion and blonde hair, a weak but hopeful mustache off the same goods, and a disposition to blush whenever he spoke or was addressed.

The other passenger was a lady of uncertain age, with glasses and a hair-lip that rather threw the young gentleman's into the shade. In fact, it was several shades darker and heavier; still she wasn't proud of it.

The young man registered as J. Bertie Van Silken, and the lady registered as Miss Stonewall McSmash. The two were total strangers to each other.

There was nothing peculiar or strange about their arrival, or the people themselves, and they might have arrived and taken their departure again without the event ever having been recorded, only for one thing. They had valises exactly alike.

Not only were the valises exactly alike in every detail, both large and new, but neither bore any name or mark, by which to distinguish one from the other.

It will not be surprising, then, if Grimesy, in carrying them up to the rooms, should have got them mixed up.

### CHAPTER III.

#### MIXING THE VALISES—GRIMESY GOES TO CHURCH.

It was not to be wondered at if Grimesy, careful as he was about such matters, should make a mistake in delivering the valises, for really there never were two valises more alike. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the maker himself could have told them apart.

It would be unfair, therefore, to say that Grimesy had intentionally changed the one for the other, for he was so particular about it, so determined that he would make no mistake, that he took the lady's valise in his right hand and the gentlemen's in the left; but then he had to climb two pairs of stairs and make four turnings, and the consequence was that when he finally reached the lady's room, to which he went first, he had clean forgotten which valise was hers.

He turned them about and examined them carefully before knocking at the door, and finally decided that the one which he carried in his left hand was the lady's, and so he knocked at the door and gave it to her.

Having got rid of one, there was no trouble about the other, and he delivered it, without any hesitation, to the gentleman.

Now it happened that the young gentleman was traveling for a manufactory of gentlemen's clothing, and having occasion to call on some of his customers that afternoon, took the valise which Grimesy had given him, and went out.

It also happened that the lady had occasion to open her valise for some reason only known to herself, but had occasion to go down to the office half an hour later.

She didn't look pleased as she approached the clerk's desk, with the valise in her hand.

"Now, sir," said Miss McSmash, shaking her fist in Jags' face, "mebbe you'll be good enough to tell me what you meant by sending this valise to my room, and keeping mine!"

Jags was stunned and horrified. Visions of a dark conspiracy and blackmail floated before his prophetic eyes, and made him tired.

He did not reply—he could not—on the spur of the moment, but gazed with open-mouthed and wide-eyed astonishment at the angry lady, and seemed to be calculating the probable horse-power of the gigantic fist in front of his innocent nose.

"Are you going to answer my question?" screamed the infuriated Miss McSmash, her anger gradually mounting like a thermometer on the sunny side of the house.

"Eh?" said Jags, helplessly.

"Are you going to answer my question, or are you



going to stand there all day with your mouth open like a charity-box?"

"What was it you wished to know, ma'am?" asked the bewildered clerk.

"I want to know why you sent me this valise, and kept my own. Do you understand that?" she yelled.

"I—I—dunno—I—"

"You don't know? Who does?"

"I dunno. Isn't that your satchel, ma'am?"

"My satchel! My satchel!" she fairly screeched.

"Does it look like my satchel?"

"I dunno. Don't it?"

"No, it don't—at least, the contents don't!"

"Well, of course, I wasn't supposed to know what the contents were like," said Jags, nervously. "Er—how d'ye tell?"

"How do I tell? How do I tell?" she screamed. "D'ye think I can't tell my own clothing when I see it? Look at that?" she yelled, holding up a pair of pants. "Does that look like the proper apparel for a lady?"

"I—I—dunno—I guess not. I'm not a married man, of course, and—"

"Married man, nonsense! Don't common sense tell you that I can't put on these clothes?"

"No, I don't think you could," said Jags, timidly. "They're too small."

"Too small! Idiot!" she screamed, firing the valise at his head. "Now, hand out my satchel, quick, or I'll make it hot for you!"

Just then the major came in, and when the matter had been explained to him, he said:

"It was a mistake of the bell-boy in delivering your satchel, ma'am. Go to your room, please, and I'll see that yours is sent to you in a few minutes."

"See that it is!" she snapped, and flounced out of the room.

The major then called Grimesy, and when that innocent young gentleman strolled up, the major said, in a stern voice:

"How is this, my boy?"

"How's which?" he asked, innocently.

"How did you come to take this satchel to the lady's room?"

"Didn't I give her the right grip?"

"No, you didn't. Where did you get this one, anyway?" roared the major.

"Why, ye see there was a gent's grip to be taken up at the same time, and they were precisely alike, and I took the lady's in my right hand and the gent's in my left, so as to be sure not to make a mistake. But I had to turn round four times in going up, and I s'pose the lady's must have got on the other side, somehow."

"Did you put them down and change hands when you turned round?"

"No, sir; I didn't let them out of my hands, and that's the funniest part of it. But I know it was just on account of turning so many corners. Did you ever notice how things get mixed when you have to turn corners, major?" asked Grimesy, his soft blue eyes, with all their tenderness, full on the major.

"Yes, I've noticed it, my boy," said the major, melting at once, and bursting into a laugh. "Things do get mixed in going round corners. But you must be more careful another time. Now, take this satchel to the gentleman's room, explain that you made a mistake, and take the other satchel to the lady's room."

"All right, sir," said Grimesy, glad to get out of it so easily, and dashed away.

He soon returned, however, with the announcement that the gentlemen had gone out.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish!" cried the major, getting angry again. "Suppose that fellow leaves town with the lady's valise, what's to be done?"

"Dunno, sir," said Grimesy, "unless we can persuade the lady that it's the latest fad for ladies to wear gent's clothes."

"It's highly probable that we can do that," roared the major. "No, sir, if he's gone with that valise you'll have to pay for it, young man!"

"That means two years' wages!" gasped Grimesy.

"I'm sorry for you, my boy, but I can't help it. It will be a wholesome lesson for you. Make you more careful another time."

"Yes, there's a bushel of comfort in that," groaned the wretched Grimesy.

"Too bad," said the major, beginning to relent again.

"But—hello! here comes the fellow now."

J. Bertie Van Silken strolled in, with a look of sublime disgust; and, placing the valise upon the counter, said, timidly:

"I—I—guess somebody's made a mistake—that is—er—this is not my valise."

"I know," said the major. "We have just discovered that you had a lady's satchel, and that she had yours."

"Yes," said Van Silken, blushing, "it was quite a serious mistake for me."

"How so?" asked the major.

"Why, you see, this is my first trip, and I called upon some old customers of the house. They received me politely, and after some conversation I opened that cursed valise to show my samples. Without noticing exactly what I was doing, I took out an article of clothing—ladies' clothing—that made them roar with laughter, and—and made me feel embarrassed."

"What was it?" asked the major, nearly dying with suppressed laughter.

"I—I—don't know exactly. You might know, as you are a married man. It looked something like a cage, and was laced together like a shoe."

"I couldn't guess," said the major, laughing; "you might ask the lady herself."

"No—no—I shouldn't like to do that," said Bertie, blushing violently.

"Well, what did you do when you discovered your mistake?"

"I hardly know what I did. All I remember is, that I got out of that store as lively as I knew how, and the roar of laughter that followed me made me feel awful."

"Well, here's your valise," said the major, handing him his satchel. "You can go round now and make it all right."

"Make it all right!" cried Bertie. "Great Scott! There isn't money enough in New York to induce me to enter that store again!"

"I am very sorry," said the major, trying to look serious. "But you see for yourself that the valises are exactly alike."

"Yes, I see they are, but—"

"And you will excuse me for laughing, for really the situation was very ridiculous and funny, don't you think so?"

"Very," said Bertie, dryly, as he took his satchel and went away.

Grimesy then took the lady's valise and went up to her room with it.

"You're sure you've got the right one this time, are you?" she snapped, as she took the satchel.

"I think so," said Grimesy. "At all events, the gentleman found he couldn't use the contents as samples of gents' clothing."

"Shouldn't think he could," she cried, lifting some mysterious articles out of the satchel. "The thing has been handling my corsets and all my underwear."

"Is it all there?" asked Grimesy.

"Yes, for a wonder," she snapped, and slammed the door.

The next morning being Sunday, Grimesy was up early, and, dressing himself in his best duds, was just considering what church he should attend, when the major came to his room and knocked at the door.

"All ready for church?" asked the major, when Grimesy opened the door.

"Yes, sir," said Grimesy. "I was just wondering what church to attend."

"Come with me," said the major.

"All right, sir," said Grimesy, and they strolled off together.

Grimesy couldn't help thinking what a change there was in the major from yesterday. Not only had his



stern, pompous manner given way to mild and smiling affability, but his clothes had a different look.

Instead of the turn-down, not overly clean collar of every-day, he wore a spotless standing collar that threatened his ears; and the rusty derby, with its glossy band, had been replaced with an extremely high and scrupulously brushed silk hat.

"You don't know how glad it makes me feel to have you go to church with me," said the major, as they walked along. "It makes me feel as if you were my own son."

"Did you ever have a son?" asked Grimesy.

"Yes," said the major, wiping his eyes. "I had a little boy, and he would be about your age now, but——"

"Is he dead?"

"No. But——"

Here the major broke down and wept.

"Did he skip?"

"Yes, my boy, that is the truth of it," blubbered the major. "I wasn't a kind father to him. I whipped him for a trifling offense, and he ran away, and I have never heard from him since."

Here they entered the church.

The day was sultry, so as soon as the singing was over and the sermon commenced, the major began to nod. The sermon proved to be a very long and dreary one, and the farther it went the sounder the major slept and the louder he snored.

Grimesy felt rather drowsy, too, and had hard work to keep awake for a while; but he thought it wouldn't look well to go to sleep, so he looked about for something to amuse himself with.

He found amusement for a while in catching the flies that lighted in swarms upon the back of the pew in front of him, pulling their wings off and dropping them down the back of the major's neck when he nodded forward.

When he'd got about a dozen down, their walking about on his back caused the major to squirm and wriggle a good deal, much to the annoyance of the prim old lady who sat next to him.

Finally a large pinching bug buzzed about Grimesy for a moment, made a dive and hit the major's nose, and bounded back and fell on its back in Grimesy's lap.

The major was gradually diving forward at the moment the bug struck him, and it caused him to wake with a start and snap a very tough snore in two.

He kept awake for a moment, and scowled at the back of the lady in front who wore a very large hat. But, apparently arriving at the conclusion that he had jammed his nose against the hat, and that the lady was not to blame, the major gradually dozed off again.

In the meantime Grimesy had caught the bug, and after examining it to his satisfaction, watched his chance, and when the major dived forward again, dropped it down the back of his neck to keep the flies company.

As soon as the bug commenced prancing around over the major's spine that gentlemen indulged in a series of squirms that not only shocked the old lady next to him, but attracted the attention of everybody for a dozen pews around.

The bug evidently objected to this treatment, and showed its disapproval by taking a firm hold of the major's flesh with its powerful pinchers.

This caused the major not only to wake, but to jump about four feet high and utter a yell that startled that drowsy congregation. There was general commotion.

The preacher stopped preaching, and whispered something to one of the deacons, and this deacon whispered to another deacon, and the two came down the aisle, and, taking the major by the arms, led him out.

When they got him out into the vestibule, one of the deacons said:

"Brother Quillpick, I'm astonished at you. We all have our little failings—I take a drop myself sometimes—but you have no business to come to church in that condition."

"It's a disgrace to the church, Brother Quillpick," said the other deacon, "and if you have no more respect for yourself and your family, you ought to have for the church."

"Yes," said Deacon Doleful Shortbreath, "a man should control his appetite for drink, if he can; but if he can't he should stay away from meeting—when he's that way, at least."

The major, between these men's talk and the agitation of the bug down his back, had by this time got worked up to a furious rage. He always tried to appear mild and sweet-tempered in presence of the members of his church, and had always succeeded before; but the provocation was too great this time, and he could hold in no longer.

"What in thunder are you fellows trying to get through you, any way?" yelled the major. "D'ye think I am doing this for fun?"

"There, there, Brother Quillpick," coaxed Deacon Tobias Feelbad. "Don't, I beg of you, add to your sinfulness by allowing your anger to rise, and using profanity. We know it's a weakness rather than intentional sin on your part, and you have our sympathy and prayers for your reformation."

"Go to thunder with your sympathy, and your prayers, too!" yelled the major, so loudly that several other members came out. "Can't a fellow jump and holler when he's stung without being suspected of being drunk?"

"Tut, tut!" cried good old Deacon Sweetbread. "This will never do! This is awful! Get him home, somebody, do!"

"Yes, he must be got home," said Brother Lovejoy. "It will never do to let him be seen in such a condition here."

"Gentlemen, will you listen to reason?" roared the major. The fact is——

"Yes, yes; we know all about that, brother," cried Brother Lovejoy. "But you must go home now. Brothers, some of you give me a hand here," he said, grasping one of the major's arms.

With that another powerful man grasped his other arm, and the major was hustled into the street, a cab was called, and he was shoved in.

"Here's his boy," said Deacon Feelbad, as Grimesy came out of the church. "Put the boy in with him, to see him safe home. See that your pa goes straight home, little boy," said the deacon to Grimesy, as he climbed into the cab. "And don't let him stop at a saloon," he whispered in the boy's ear.

"All right, sir," said Grimesy, and the cab rolled away.

The major was too angry to talk for a while, but after a little he turned to Grimesy, and said:

"This is a pretty state of affairs, my boy. To think that those idiots should imagine I was inebriated! And, of course, every member of that congregation thinks I was, and will tell it round among all their acquaintances."

"It's too bad," said Grimesy, sympathetically. "And you really hadn't taken many drinks, either, had you, major?"

"Many drinks!" roared the major, growing furious. "I haven't tasted a drop for a week!"

"I didn't suppose you had," said Grimesy, gently. "Still you acted kind of funny in church."

"Acted kind of funny?" roared the major. "I guess anybody would act funny with a dozen bumble-bees down his back, walking round, and stinging him once in a while for a change!"

"Oh, did you have a bumble-bee on you?" Grimesy asked, innocently.

"Yes, fifty of 'em! And they're there yet."

"Why don't you get them out?"

"How can I before we get home?"

"I'll get them out for you, major."

"I wish you would."

Grimesy put his hand down the major's back and pulled out the bug, which was now in a badly crushed state, and several dead flies.

"Is that what it was?" cried the major, in astonishment. "I thought it was bumble-bees. Now, my boy," he said, confidentially, his wrath having subsided, "not a word about this to my wife or Jags."

"Certainly not."

"Because if you do, I'll never hear the last of it."

By this time they had got back home, and, as luck would have it, Mrs. Quillpick and Jags were both in front of the hotel when the cab drove up, Jags having stepped



out to air himself, and the madam having just returned from a different church.

They were both surprised to see the major come from church in a cab, and the madam was not only surprised, she was disgusted.

"Huk!" she snapped. "It strikes me you are getting pretty extravagant, riding from church in a cab. I can walk or take a street car, though! Little do you care for your wife's comfort, so long as you can enjoy yourself! Just like a man!"

"My dear," began the major, "I am not well, and —"

"And I s'pose that great lump of a boy isn't well, either!" she shouted. "He had to ride, too, the lazy, good-for-nothing thing! Don't do enough to give him exercise during the week, and now he must ride from church on Sunday!"

The major was about to trump up some other excuse, when an old acquaintance, by the name of Gregory Slum, came along. He and the major had been cronies in former times, but had fallen out about something, and there had been a coolness between them since.

Slum had never missed an opportunity to injure the major, while the major had treated Slum with silent contempt.

Now, it happened that Slum had passed the church just as the major was being led out, and, of course, inquired what was the matter. The members of the church gave him no answer; but, unluckily, a bootblack was lurking about at the proper time to catch the bulk of the conversation between the deacons and the major, and he volunteered the information that the "gen'leman's under the weather."

So when Slum came along and saw the major in front of the hotel, he yelled:

"Hullo, Quillpick! I hear you was fired out o' church fer bein' drunk this morning! Nice church-member you air!"

"Go on about your business, you old loafer!" yelled the major, making for him.

"Nice church-member you air, you old bum!" shouted Slum, hurrying away.

"Oho!" cried Mrs. Quillpick. "That accounts for your having to ride home. Oh, dear! that I should be compelled to live with such a man."

Here the lady went into hysterics, and had to be carried in, and the major and Grimesy made their escape.

That afternoon Killmany, the electrical agent, left the hotel, and when his traps were taken out of the room, Grimesy and his chum, boy-like, went up into the room to see if he had left anything.

The floor was littered with empty boxes, bottles, bits of wire, etc., a good many of which the boys appropriated.

Finally, as Grimesy was nosing about, he found a bottle of some kind of mineral water. He opened it, and smelt of it, when he found the odor so pungent that it nearly knocked him down.

"Whew!" he cried, "talk about your musk! That knocks it all silly."

"What is it?" asked Merty.

"Don't ask me. Smell it."

"Jee Whittaker!" cried Merty. "Sewer-gas boiled down and double-distilled! Throw it out!"

"Not much. I'm going to have some fun with that."

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Dunno yet. Put it on some dude's handkerchief, maybe."

"What's the matter with putting it on Jags' clothes? He'll be going to see his girl to-night."

"I have a better scheme than that," said Grimesy.

"What's that?"

"Pour it into the major's stationary wash-basin, and he'll smelt it and think it's sewer-gas coming up, and have a dozen plumbers round here to-morrow."

"That's the racket," said Merty. "If we can only catch the major out of his room."

"That will be easy enough. He's in and out all day Sundays, and he never locks his door."

"Don't pour it all in at once."

"Of course not. I'll just put a little in now, and some

more after a while, and so on, so as to keep the perfume nice and rich. See?"

The boys glided along the hall to the major's room, but they could see through the partially open door that the major was in the room, so they went back and concealed themselves in a door-way and watched until they saw him come out.

Then they glided softly into the room. Grimesy pushed a small piece of sponge down into the pipe, not enough to prevent the water from running out, however, and then poured a portion of the loud-smelling mineral water in.

They then slipped out, but returned several times during the afternoon and evening and repeated the operation.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE FESTIVE PLUMBER—DISTURBING A CONCERT.

Early Monday morning the major rang for Grimesy to come to his room.

Although it was long after the major's time of rising, Grimesy found him still in bed. He had all the windows open, and chloride of lime scattered all about the room and piled in heaps about the wash-basin.

"Grimesy, my boy," said the major, in a feeble voice, "I want you to get a plumber and have him tear out these pipes, clean down to the sewer, if necessary."

"Why, what's wrong, major?" asked Grimesy, innocently.

"Sewer-gas," said the major. "Don't you smell it? It's terrible. It has given me the malaria."

"That's bad," said Grimesy. "Whew! it has a fine, fruity smell, hasn't it? A fellow could almost get on it and ride. How long have you smelled it?"

"Oh, for some time; but not so much till last night. It was rather cool when I went to bed, and I didn't notice it much then, and closed the windows before retiring. I woke about midnight, and I was nearly suffocated. I thought the gas was escaping at first, and after opening the windows I lit the gas and examined all the burners and pipes, but could find no leaks. Concluding that it was merely a want of ventilation in the room, I was about to retire; but as I went to wash my hands before going to bed I found where the smell came from. Great powers! It made my hair stand on end. It was worse than a ship-yard on fire. Go get a plumber, and you might stop in and tell Dr. Bolus to drop in and see me on his way round."

"All right, sir."

And Grimesy dashed away after the plumber and doctor.

In a little while two plumbers and four assistants from the firm of Infectious, Subway & Co., put in an appearance, closely followed by the doctor.

The plumbers nosed around and finally got to work in earnest, and tore the whole side of the building out for two stories and the basement; ripped out all the steam, water and waste-pipes, and dug up the sewer a few yards.

After putting in all that day and part of the next they got things back in something like their former shape, except the plaster, and by that time Grimesy's mineral water had evaporated enough so that you couldn't smell it above the disinfectants.

"Ah! a person can breathe now without being poisoned," said the major, when the plumbers, plasterers, and paper-hangers had finished their work. "It has cost me a good deal of money to get rid of that terrible sewer-gas, but I don't mind that so long as I got rid of it."

"I'm so glad," said Grimesy. "How's your malaria, major dear?"

"Oh, it's all gone, thanks to Dr. Bolus' prescription, and the getting rid of the sewer-gas."

"Oh, I'm so glad," said Grimesy; "I was so worried about it that I couldn't sleep nights."

"I wasn't in any imminent danger, my boy, and there really was no cause for alarm. But, my boy," said the major, his eyes growing moist, "your big-hearted sympathy affects me very much. I do not remember to have ever seen a boy of your age who was so noble, so good, so unselfish."

"How can I help it, major dear, when you are so good



and generous yourself? I sometimes think that you were never intended for this bad, cold world."

"No, no, my boy," sobbed the major. "Don't talk that way. I am not worthy of it. It is only because you are so good yourself that you think I am."

"Oh, no, major dear," said Grimesy, wiping his eyes with one hand, and loosening a screw in the major's bedstead with the other. "You are an angel, dear major!"

The major's bedstead was an antiquated, loose-jointed affair, and had the pleasant habit of spreading apart and letting the slats drop whenever the screws worked loose, which was extremely frequent.

Grimesy was acquainted with its peculiarities, and as he stood by the imaginary sick man, pouring out taffy by the gallon, he managed to loosen all the screws on that side of the bedstead.

"Yes, dear major," said Grimesy, as he loosened the last screw, "you are an angel. I've felt it ever since I first saw you, and I often think what a lucky dog I was to get under your hovering wing."

"Oh, Grimesy, my dear boy!" cried the major, suddenly, attempting to spring up in bed to embrace him.

But at that moment the slats all slipped out, and the major, mattress and all, went to the floor in a confused heap.

"Thunderation!" yelled the major, as he lay with his chin and knees about two inches apart. "I told that chambermaid to tighten the screws in this bedstead when she went to make up the bed again. These servants aren't worth shucks."

"Oh, dear major!" cried Grimesy, with a voice trembling with emotion, "I do hope you're not hurt."

"No, I am not hurt, my boy, but this is a confounded nuisance having one's bed tumbling down this way."

"I'm very sorry," said Grimesy.

"Of course you are," said the major. "Your noble heart makes it impossible that you shouldn't be. But you couldn't help it."

"No. But it makes me feel so sad to think I couldn't prevent it."

"Well, well, my dear boy, do not take it to heart so. We shall soon fix up the bed, and there's no great harm done."

Grimesy helped the major out of his hole, and fixed up the bed for him, and the major lay down again.

"Grimesy, my dear boy," said the major, "while I can hardly bear to lose the sight of your face, still they may need you down in the office. So, if you will give me my medicine, I will try to worry along without you for a while and try to sleep."

"It pains me to leave you," said Grimesy, pouring out a spoonful of hair-oil for the major to take instead of his sirup; "but, as you say, dear major, they will want me down stairs. Here's your medicine, major dear."

"Thank you. Bah!" roared the major, as he swallowed the hair-oil. "That cussed stuff gets worse with each dose."

"Too bad. Why does the horrid doctor give my dear major such nasty medicine?"

"I don't know," cried the major, making a wry face.

"I think he has a grudge against me."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Grimesy. "Shall I give you some water, dear major?"

"Thanks, I wish you would."

"This will take the nasty taste out of your mouth," said Grimesy, as he drew a glass of water, and dropped a little tincture of aloes into it. "There, try that, major dear."

"Thanks. I need something—Great Scott!" he yelled, after swallowing the water. "That's worse than the medicine!"

"It's you, major dear, or rather your taste. It's always that way when you're bilious."

"Well, I've been bilious lots of times, but I never had it serve me like that before!" roared the major.

"You were never quite so bad before, mebbe," said Grimesy.

"Maybe not, my boy," groaned the major. "I guess I'm a pretty sick man."

"Awful!" cried Grimesy, with a horrified look. "Shall I go for the doctor?"

"Yes, do, my boy, and be quick."

And Grimesy hurried away. As the reader has probably surmised, there was really nothing the matter with the major. He was a robust, healthy man, with an appetite like a street-car horse; but, like a great many other people, he had a wonderful imagination in that direction, and it did not require much persuasion to convince him that he was sick at any time.

About this time the major had a visit from a couple of nieces from Philadelphia.

The young ladies were not remarkable for their accomplishments. They had a fair education, could talk and dance passably well, but their knowledge of music extended no farther than the ability to pound somewhat discordantly on the piano, and sing the simple popular songs of the day in shrill, unmelodious voices, that sounded, to use Grimesy's own words, "like a pig under a gate supported by a cat with a cold on the back fence."

In view of this fact, coupled with her ambition to "make something of the girls," Mrs. Quillpick said to her husband, a few days after the young ladies' arrival:

"Major, we are rich, while Althia and Hattie's parents are poor; and as we are childless, we ought to do something for the girls."

"Yes, my dear, I think we had," said the major. "What shall it be?"

"Get them a music-teacher."

"By all means," said the major. "If there is anybody that needs a music-teacher, it's Althia and Hattie, for I s'pose they'd try to sing any way, and, not to speak disrespectfully of the girls, their singing at present is positively distressing."

"Their voices are not so bad, major. True, they show a lack of cultivation, and that is why I desire to get them an instructor."

"All right, get them one as soon as you like, the sooner the better, for to tell the truth, the boarders are already beginning to complain of their nightly screeching."

"Major Quillpick, you're a brute!" cried his amiable wife, flying into a passion at the last remark; and she flounced out of the room.

The madam forthwith procured the services of a music-teacher of some pretensions, by the name of Alphonse Crescendo, said to be an Italian and a graduate of Milan, but strangely enough his accent was strikingly similar to that so frequently heard in and about Cherry street.

However, he proved to be a good teacher, and there was soon a marked improvement in his pupils' voices.

As time wore on their voices continued to improve, and finally it was announced that the young ladies would sing a few choice selections in the parlor on a certain evening, and all the boarders, besides a good many friends outside, were invited to be present and hear the music.

From that day to the evening of the exhibition the house was in an uproar of preparation for the grand event. The parlors were sleeked up, the old furniture refurbished and brand-new tidies appeared on old chairs, whose backs bore the stains of a generation of greasy heads, and the old piano had a professional tuner banging about it for a whole day.

While all this is going on, we must not forget Grimesy. Although temporarily overshadowed, he was still there, as large as life.

He did not appear to be as much enthused over the coming event, or the young ladies themselves, as some of the rest. He had his own opinions in the matter, and although these opinions had not been made sufficiently public to become topics of conversation among the grander folk, nevertheless were known to at least one person, and that was his faithful friend, Merty Biffin.

"All this spread-eagle circus over a couple of spindle-shanked young kids, just 'cause they happened to be of the pink-ribbon sex, makes me tired," he said to his chum, a few hours before the exhibition.

"I guess you're jealous of their voices," said Merty.

"I should say not. If I had a voice like that I'd rent it out to a second-hand menagerie to supply the worn-out hyenas with a voice."



"Going to attend the blow-out, aren't you?"

"Oh, I s'pose I'll have to honor it with my presence; but I may take a hand in the entertainment."

"Going to work up any racket to make it interesting?"

"Don't know but we might do that. Let's see," said Grimesy, "what shall it be? I'll have to put on my thinking wheel and grind out something rare and racy for the occasion. Nothing common will do for this circus."

Grimesy looked about for some time for something to make some fun, and was almost despairing, when he noticed a small yellow dog lying on the office floor asleep. He coaxed the dog off up stairs and into the parlor.

Under the piano was a small box or chest filled with sheet music. Grimesy removed this, while Merty held the dog, and the animal was placed in the chest, the lid closed, and the music piled on top to hold it down.

"That ought to furnish amusement for a nice, select family gathering," said Grimesy.

"How's that going to amuse 'em?" asked Merty.

"If you can't guess, wait and see," said Grimesy, as he strode out of the parlor.

In a little while the company began to gather, and by eight o'clock the parlor was full.

There were young and old, ladies of various degrees of respectability, and dudes of high and low degree, and finally the young ladies who were to sing, accompanied by the professor.

The young ladies were dressed in white, and looked very attractive, so much so that several dudes lost their hearts on the spot; while the professor was resplendent in white vest and black trousers that bagged at the knee, and his bushy red hair shining with oil.

Miss Althia seated herself at the piano, while Miss Hattie and the professor stood at her back.

The professor, with a grand flourish, turned over the music and selected an operatic piece; Miss Althia ran her fingers lightly over the keys, and began the accompaniment. The young ladies launched into the piece with the vigor of an old woman beating a carpet, and the professor furnished the baritone.

They had sung but a few bars, however, when the dog set up a howl that sadly marred the melody of the singers.

The professor instantly struck the piano with his baton, which was a signal to stop. He was furious. Here were pupils that he had taken great pride in, and had spoken of in the highest terms. And now to have them break down on their very first public recital, and on a piece which they had sung a thousand times without a break, was too much for human endurance.

"There's a discord somephere," said the professor, in his rich Italian accent. "That niver happened before, ladies an' gintlemin. Now, throy it wance more."

They sailed in again, but had got but a little ways when the dog began such a howl that they could scarcely hear anything else.

Now the professor was mad.

He pranced about, and swung his huge arms round like a wind-mill in a gale, while his broad face glowed like a ribroast in a state of perspiration.

Finally, in his agitation, he succeeded in kicking over the pile of music on top of the chest.

The dog, finding that he could raise the lid, did so, and jumped out with a terrific yelp, and made a dash at the professor's trousers.

"Git out, ye baste!" yelled the professor, and jumped ten feet, upsetting the piano-stool with Miss Althia, getting his feet tangled in her skirts, and taking a header into a fat lady's lap.

Meanwhile the dog, having secured a mouthful of the professor's trousers, started on a yelling career around the room, to the consternation and alarm of everybody.

Every one who could jumped upon chairs, women screamed and fainted, and men kicked at the flying dog, and tried to get out of the way.

Finally the dog came round near Grimesy, and that young gentleman, with characteristic coolness, grabbed the animal by the back of the neck, walked deliberately to the door and fired it out. He then went back to his seat with as much unconcern as though it was an everyday occurrence.

This surprised everybody and gained for him hearty applause.

In the course of time the audience got settled, the professor cooled down, and the concert went on, and was declared a great success.

When it was over the professor made a neat little speech, in which he thanked the audience for their kind attention, eulogized the young ladies upon their talent, and the excellence of their performance under such trying circumstances, and finally closed by praising Grimesy for his coolness and valor in stepping in to avert a terrible panic.

After the company had departed the major called Grimesy into his room, and, looking him straight in the eye, said:

"Grimesy, my boy, how did that dog get into that box?"

"That's just what I've been trying to figure out, sir," said Grimesy, innocently. "Merty thinks it got in there to sleep, and somebody shut him up without knowing he was in there; but I kinder think somebody put him in on purpose to raise a rumpus."

The boy's straightforward manner, his coolness, and, moreover, his soulful eyes, which never faltered in their calm gaze into the major's, completely disarmed the latter. He had been positive that Grimesy had done it, and now he was just as positive that he had not.

"Forgive me, my boy," cried the major, grasping Grimesy's hand. "Forgive me for suspecting you of the trick; but now I am satisfied that you are innocent. But tell me, my boy, have you no idea who the guilty party is?"

"I have my suspicions," said Grimesy, confidentially, "but I wouldn't like to say, because I might be wrong."

"Speak out, my boy. The guilty party deserves to be shown up and punished, and you do yourself an injustice as well as myself in screening him."

"That's true, major. There's nothing too bad for the guilty party; but you wouldn't like to punish an innocent one."

"Certainly not, my boy; but if you suspect any one, you might tell me, and we could then watch and find out, if possible, whether your suspicions were well-founded or not."

"Well, I'll tell you," said Grimesy, earnestly. "As I said, this is only a suspicion on my part, and I may be wrong. Now, you know how jealous one woman is of another?"

"Yes."

"And you know they'll do anything for spite?"

"Yes."

"Well, you know how that Miss Highsee, that rooms in 28, talked about and sneered at the girls because they learned faster than she did?"

"I remember."

"You recollect she said the concert would be a failure, and that she would rather work a year to make it a failure than to lift a finger to help it along."

"Yes, I recall all her ill-natured remarks now, but do you think she would stoop to anything so low as that of putting a dog in a box under the piano?"

"I dunno. But the initials 'C. H.' were on that dog's collar."

"Gracious! is that so?" exclaimed the major, almost fainting.

"That's what."

"C. H.—Catherine Highsee!" said the major. There's no doubt about it. Why, my boy, you're a real detective. We'll ferret this thing out, if it takes a life-time!"

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MAJOR AS A DETECTIVE—AN UNEASY BED.

"What's this scent you've been putting the old man on to?" asked Jags, next morning after the concert.

"Oh, nothing much," replied Grimesy. "He wants to find out who put that dog into the box under the piano, and I'm trying to help him out, that's all."

"How are you goin' to do it?"



"Dunno yet. I gave the gov'nor a little clew, but I dunno whether he'll make anything out of it or not."

"What was the clew?"

"Why, you know the dog has on a collar."

"Yes."

"Well, the collar's marked 'C. H.'"

"What does that stand for?"

"Catherine Highsee, of course."

"Catherine nothing!" cried Jags. "That's Caleb Hummel's dog."

"Is that so?" asked Grimesy, innocently.

"Yes, and you know it is. Now, old fellow, you know who put that dog in there."

"What makes you think so?"

"I know it. Come, now, own up. I'll never give you away, and if there's any fun to be had out of the old man on the strength of it, I'm with you."

"Honest?"

"Honest."

"All right, it's a go. I put the dog in there all right enough, but when the gov'nor tackled me about it, I put him on this scent."

"Well, where's the fun coming in?"

"I'll tell you. You see the gov'nor's got the dog locked up down in the basement, keeping it until he hears of Miss Highsee inquiring for it, which he thinks she will, and he's got all the help in the house posted, so that the moment she inquires about the dog they'll tell him, and then he'll bring the dog out and face her with the crime."

"Of course she knows no more about that dog than the dog knows about the Fourth of July, and she'll never ask for it; but Caleb Hummel does know about it, for it's his, and he'll be after it. Now, you know Caleb, and as he's a pretty good sort of a chap, you can put him on to the racket. See?"

"How?"

"When he comes in inquiring for his dog, you tell him on the quiet where it is, but tell him to keep mum for a few days. In the meantime we'll advertise for the dog, pretending that it's a young lady advertising, and sign it 'C. H.' When the gov'nor delivers the dog at the number indicated is when we'll have fun with him."

"How about Caleb?"

"Oh, that's another act in the play. When the gov'nor gives up the dog, and is pretty thoroughly disgusted over not finding the culprit who put it in the box, Caleb can come on him and make it hot for him for losing his dog."

"You're a cute one, you are," said Jags. "When are you going to advertise it?"

"Right away. I'll go round to the publication office now, if there's nothing to do."

"You may go; but sha'n't I write it out for you?"

"Yes, you write it out," said Grimesy. "You write a beautiful hand, if you do spell badly, and eat with your knife. That's what the printer is stuck on; he don't care anything about your spelling or grammer, since you write a nice, elegant fiat, and capitalize most o' the words."

"You're wrong; I never misspell a word," said Jags.

"By the way, do you spell dog with a capital D?"

"That depends upon the size and build of the dog. A large dog you would, small dog you wouldn't."

"How about a medium-sized dog?"

"Split the difference, and spell it with a small capital."

"All right, here you are. Hurry back."

"Cert."

And away Grimesy dashed.

Early the next morning the major called Grimesy up into his room. The major was sitting with the morning paper in his hand and a broad smile on his face when Grimesy entered.

"We've got it, my boy," shouted the major, grasping Grimesy's hand.

"What, the small-pox?"

"No, the—the person who put the dog in the box the other night."

"Is that so?" asked Grimesy, glancing inquiringly about the room. "Where?"

"No, no; I mean we've got a clew to the person's whereabouts; don't you understand?"

"Oh, yes," said Grimesy, as if it had just struck him. "Well?"

"Why, here it is. An advertisement for the very dog, and signed 'C. H.'"

"You don't say so."

"Yes. See?" said the major, pointing to the advertisement which Grimesy had put in.

"Yes, sir, that's the very dog. Now, what are you going to do?"

"Why, deliver the dog to her, of course, and then charge her with the act. See?"

"Great scheme," said Grimesy. "Oh, but you're a cunning one, major."

"Well, it takes a cute one to get ahead of me, my boy. She thought she was awful cute, advertising for her dog, instead of asking for it in the house. Little did she think that I would be one of the first to see the advertisement. Oh, you've got to get up very early, Miss Highsee, to get ahead of the old major," he laughed.

"When are you going to take the dog around?" asked Grimesy.

"That is one thing I wanted to speak to you about, my boy. She'll doubtless go round to this place where she has directed the dog to be delivered some time to-day, and I want you to watch and see when she goes out, and let me know."

"Mebbe she's going to play sharp on you, though, major."

"How's that?"

"Mebbe she's made arrangements for the folks at that number to receive the dog, and she won't show up there."

"Great Scott! I hadn't thought of that. What shall we do?"

"Why, if she ain't there, refuse to give the dog to any one, and tell the person that comes to the door that you'll come back when she's in, that you won't trust anybody but her with the dog. Also ask who 'C. H.' is. She's pretty sharp, and will probably go after the dog in the night."

"Then, maybe, I'd better wait till to-night."

"I think so. I'll watch if she goes out to-night, and give you a tip."

"Do, my boy," said the major. "Oh, what would I do without you, Grimesy?"

"I'm afraid you'd miss me."

"Indeed I would. Why, I couldn't do business without you."

"It would be a little quiet, I reckon," said Grimesy, as he strolled out.

In the course of the day Caleb Hummel came in and inquired about his dog, and Jags put him on to the racket.

That evening Grimesy rushed up to the major's room and told him that Miss Highsee had gone out.

"Good!" cried the major. "I'll go at once, and I want you to go with me, my boy."

"I'd like it, sir, but Jags wants me to go somewhere for some of the boarders," said Grimesy.

"That's too bad," said the major. "Then I'll have to go alone, I suppose."

And he put on his coat and started down after his dog, while Grimesy lit out to meet Merty at the number at which the dog was to be delivered, which was where Merty roomed.

When Grimesy got there, he and Merty hastily dressed themselves in women's clothes, and waited for the major's arrival.

Merty had a room with a famliy who lived on the first floor. The head of the house, whose name was Benjamin Goeasy, was a middle aged, jolly man, who was as fond of a joke as any boy, and Merty had no trouble in getting him into the scheme.

The boys had not long to wait before the bell rang, and Grimesy went to the door, where he found the major, leading the dog.

"Does Miss Highsee live here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied Grimesy, in a woman's treble.

"Do you know whether she has lost a dog or not?" asked the major.

"I think she has," said Grimesy. "Won't you come in?"

"Thank you," said the major, stepping inside, and drag-



ging the dog, which was inclined to pull back. "Is—is she in?" he asked, in a nervous voice, pausing inside the door.

"I think she is, or will be soon. Come in."

The major walked on into the room, which was very dimly lighted, and sank into the chair which Merty had set for him.

"Has Miss Highsee got back yet?" asked Grimesy of Merty.

"No, dear," said Merty, "but I expect her every minute."

"This gentleman has brought her dog," said Grimesy.

"How kind," said Merty. "She will be delighted and pay you well, sir."

"I hope so," said the major, nervously.

"Oh, I'm sure she will," said Merty.

The major sat for a long time, and although he was not much inclined to talk, they kept up a continual chatter with him about one thing and another, until finally he began to lose his patience, and asked:

"Do you think she will be here to-night?"

"I think so," said Grimesy. "She said she would be back; but if you are in a hurry, you might leave the dog and call in the morning for your reward."

"No," said the major, firmly, "I shall leave the dog with no one but Miss Highsee."

"Why," said Grimesy, in an injured tone, "do you think we want to steal the dog? Do you think you wouldn't get your reward?"

"Not that exactly; but I desire particularly to see Miss Highsee."

"Then you do suspect us, you horrid man!" cried Grimesy, pretending to weep. "This is too much!"

"To think that we, two innocent girls, should be insulted by this bold, bad man!" cried Merty, also pretending to weep, and rubbing his shoulder very close to the major's.

"There, there!" said the major, coaxingly. "I meant no harm."

"Yes, you did, you horrid thing!" cried Grimesy, laying his hand on the major's other shoulder. "You said you wouldn't trust us, and that is the same as saying we're dishonest. Boo-hoo hoo."

"No, no my dear girl," said the major, putting his arm around Grimesy.

"It was so cruel to speak to two little defenseless girls like that. If our pa was here he wouldn't let you talk like that," said Merty.

"Don't take on, my girly," said the major, putting his other arm around him. "I wouldn't hurt your little feelings for the world. You're too nice a little girl for that, and if you'll only give me a kiss—"

"Oh, you naughty man!" cried Grimesy. "You want to kiss my sister!"

"Hush, you little minx, or I'll kiss you," laughed the major.

"Don't you dare!" cried Grimesy.

"Yes, I will," cried the major, releasing Merty, and attempting to kiss Grimesy. "If I don't, I'm—"

But here both boys screamed, the door flew open, and in rushed old Goeasy, with a shotgun in his hand.

"What are you doin' with my darters?" yelled Goeasy, leveling his gun at the major. "You old scoundrel! I'll blow the top o' yer head off in about a second."

The major sprang up, gave a frightened look at the gun-barrel, which was but a few inches from his nose, and then glanced about the room for a place to get out.

As the old man stood in the only door and the two windows opening on the "well," or passage between that and the next house, were closed, escape seemed out of the question, and the major thought it better to conciliate the man with the gun, if possible.

"My dear sir," began the major, "there's some mistake. I only—"

"Oh, there is, eh? Mistake? Huh!" shouted Goeasy, dancing about in a mock frenzy of passion. "S'pose I made a mistake in comin' in, didn't I? Or did I make a mistake in thinkin' I saw you huggin' my darters? I'll mistake ye. Let me git a good aim at ye."

By this time the major was frightened nearly out of

his wits. Seeing that argument wouldn't go with this old ruffian, as he supposed him to be, and expecting every moment to receive a double load of shot, he grew desperate.

He commenced jumping about the room in the vain endeavor to keep out of range of the gun, stumbling over furniture in the dim light.

Finally he edged round near the door and made a desperate dash to reach it, but the old fellow was too quick for him, and closed the door and locked it.

Things looked, indeed, desperate for the major. He imagined he saw a fiendish gleam in the old man's eye that made his blood run cold.

There was but one chance left the major—it was a hazardous one, but it was a matter of life and death, and he determined to take it.

He watched his chance, and made a wild dash for the window, and went through, carrying the sash with him, but leaving a good part of his clothing behind.

The major would have been all right, barring a badly wrecked wardrobe, the loss of his hat, and a dozen or so scratches from broken glass, for the pavement in the "well" wouldn't have hurt him much; but, as ill-luck ordained it, there was a barrel of some sort of yellow dye-stuff standing under the window. It was bad enough to fall waist-deep in this villainous stuff and discolor one's clothes; but the old chap next door, to whom the dye belonged, seeing the major fall into it, and apparently objecting to having his dye wasted in that manner, rushed out with a club, and gave the major several hearty thumps over his head and shoulders before the unfortunate man could escape.

The instant that the major jumped through the window, Grimesy hustled off his female apparel and hurried home, while Merty took the dog, which the major had left behind in his hasty flight, to its owner, Caleb Hummel.

Grimesy had arrived at the hotel, and sat quietly in the office, looking as innocent as a dove, when the major entered, hatless, bruised, his clothes in shreds and reeking with the yellow dye.

He didn't say a word to any one, but hurried through the hall and went up to his room.

"What's the matter with the old man?" asked Boggles, in surprise.

"Dunno," replied Grimesy, innocently, "unless he's been to another prayer-meeting."

"Prayer-meeting!" ejaculated Boggles. "A wake, you mean. Say," said Boggles, confidentially, "I'll tell ye what I think; I think the old man's spreeing lately."

"You don't say so," cried Grimesy. "It can't be. The gov'nor's a church member."

"That's all right. But you know he was put out of church for drunkenness only a few Sundays ago, and he's kept to his room, pretending to be sick, nearly ever since. And now he comes in looking as if he'd been drawn through a mangle and dipped in a sewer."

"Whitewashed with scrambled eggs, you mean," said Grimesy.

Just then Jags came down stairs into the office, giggling, and took Grimesy one side.

"What have you been doing with the major?" he asked.

"I just met him on the stairs, and he looks as if he'd been attending a buzz-saw festival."

Grimesy related the particulars of the racket, at which Jags laughed heartily, and then asked:

"What's become of the dog?"

"Oh, Merty took it back to Hummel."

"I thought you was goin' to have Hummel come after it, and make it hot for the major."

"That's right. We want to tell the major as soon as possible that the dog belongs to Hummel, so that he won't bother Miss Highsee."

"How'll we manage it?"

"I'll tell him. He'll be apt to call me up yet to-night, or first thing in the morning, to tell me about his troubles, and then I'll give him the story."

At that moment the major's bell rang.

"There it is now," said Grimesy. "Now for a tale of woe."

And Grimesy dashed off up stairs.



When Grimesy entered the major's room, that gentleman was sitting on the side of his bed, clad in his night-clothes, the very picture of despair.

"Well, my boy," began the major, dolefully, "I've had a terrible time to-night, terrible. I wouldn't go through it again for a thousand dollars."

"Why, what's the matter; did the dog give you trouble?"

"No, but the brute at that house did."

"Did you see Miss Highsee?"

"No."

"Of course you didn't leave the dog there?" said Grimesy, innocently.

"I'm sorry to say that I did," groaned the major.

"Well, I'm sorry you did, for it now turns out that the dog didn't belong to Miss Highsee."

"Thunderation!" exclaimed the major. "To whom does it belong?"

"Caleb Hummel."

"How do you know?"

"Why, he was in the office inquiring for his dog a little while after you went away."

"Great Scott! What did he say?"

"Said he knew you had the dog, and that if it wasn't delivered to him by nine in the morning he'd make sausage meat of you."

"Great Caesar! And he'll do it, too!" groaned the major. "He's just that kind of a man. He'd think no more of killing a man than eating his breakfast. What shall we do, my boy?"

"Give him his dog."

"How can I?"

"Go round and get it, of course. Tell those folks you made a mistake, that the dog doesn't belong to Miss Highsee."

"I can't do that, my boy."

"Why not?" asked Grimesy.

"Why, the old brute who lives there tried to shoot me to-night, and I believe he will do it if I go back again."

"Is that so?" asked Grimesy, in mock surprise. "What did he want to shoot you for?"

"Well, it was like this: I went in there and asked for Miss Highsee. They said she was out, but would be back soon. There were a couple of silly girls there, and to pass the time I got to chatting with them, just as a fellow will, when all of a sudden their father, a regular old ruffian, rushed in with a gun, and tried to shoot me."

"You don't say so?" said Grimesy. "Say, major, you didn't try to kiss 'em, or anything, did you?"

"No-o-o. How can you ask such a question?"

"I didn't s'pose you did, of course, major dear; but it seemed so strange that the old fellow should just rush in without any provocation, and try to shoot you."

"Because he's an old ruffian, that's all."

"He missed you, though, or wouldn't his gun go off?" asked Grimesy.

"Oh, I didn't wait to see; I left—had to jump through the window at that."

"Gracious! Hurt the window?"

"Hang the window!" roared the major. "I believe I did smash it, but that doesn't concern me so much as my clothes and my skin. They suffered severely by the operation."

"That's too bad, major dear. You don't know how sorry I am. And to save you any more trouble and pain, I'll go round there in the morning, and get the dog and take it to Hummel myself."

"No, no, my boy," cried the major, feelingly. "I couldn't think of allowing you to risk your young and innocent life in such a reckless way."

"Please let me go, major dear," pleaded Grimesy.

"They wouldn't hurt a little boy like me."

"What should I do if they should kill you, my boy?"

"Oh, but I know they won't. Please let me do this for you."

"Well, if you insist upon it, my boy," said the major, his eyes growing moist. "Oh, my boy, you're such a treasure. I do not know what I should do if it were not for you to help me out of my difficulties."

"It makes me feel so good to think that I can help you

out of some of your trouble, for you have so much," said Grimesy, wiping his eyes.

"Yes, my boy, I'm sorely afflicted. I guess I'll retire now."

"Yes, you look weary; you'd better go to bed," said Grimesy, arranging the covers, and dropping a handful of short hair between the sheets. "There, now, let me cover you up nice and snug."

The hair which Grimesy scattered in the bed consisted of bristles from an old brush, cut about a quarter of an inch long, and the reader can imagine the sensation of having them in contact with the skin.

"Thank you, my boy," said the major. "Good-night."

"Good-night, sir," said Grimesy, and started out.

"Grimesy," called the major, squirming about in bed.

"Sir."

"Grimesy, there's something in this bed that pricks my legs—feels like a million fine needles."

"Sheet hasn't been well ironed, I reckon," said Grimesy.

"I don't know what it is, but I know it's mighty disagreeable," roared the major. "I wish you'd send the chambermaid up, my boy."

"All right, sir."

And Grimesy vanished.

When he had sent the chambermaid up to the major's room, he returned to the office to give Jags, who was to await him there, an account of his interview with the major.

"Well, Grimesy," said Jags, as soon as that innocent young man entered the office, "how does the old major feel after his adventure?"

"Decidedly rocky, I should say. But I got him to bed finally, though I'm afraid he won't sleep well."

"Why?"

"Oh, he complained of something pricking him. Said it felt as if a million fine needles were sticking in him."

"Ha! ha! Some o' your work, you rogue."

"No. I only dropped about a pint of short hairs into the sheets, that's all; and—"

"You did, did you?"

Grimesy and Jags both jumped six feet at the sound of the voice, which was immediately behind them, and looking around, they both beheld, to their horror, the major.

"So! You are at the bottom of all this devilry, are you?"

The major was livid with rage. Grimesy and Jags were silent. They knew their doom had arrived, and that this was their last joke.

"So you are into it, too, you weak-eyed, small-voiced pasteboard pattern of a man!" he roared, glaring at Jags. "Now, you two villains, just see how quick you can pack your collar-boxes and get out, or I'll put some caper-sauce over you and make a meal of you."

They waited for no second bidding, and with sad hearts and rueful faces they went away.

(THE END.)

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